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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, lover of humanity, give us today Your pardon and peace. Pardon the sins of our lips: the unkind words we may have spoken. Pardon the sins of our minds: the refusal to face facts. Lord, pardon the sins of our hearts: the pride that makes us forget to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

Mighty God, place Your peace within our Senators, providing them with the certainty that Your love can vanquish fear. And, Lord, we continue to pray for the tornado recovery efforts.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 14, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Samantha D. Elliott, of New Hampshire, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Hampshire.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SENATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to advance at least one more Biden judicial nominee; we will move forward on our annual Defense bill; we will vote on the motion to proceed on legislation to raise the debt ceiling—all, hopefully, before we start the afternoon. It is a busy day for the Senate, so let me break down each of these items in some detail.

On the legislative front, later this morning, the Senate will vote to invoke cloture on the annual Defense bill, negotiated on a bicameral-bipar-

tisan basis. For over 60 years, the NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act, has passed without fail, on a mostly bipartisan basis. So I thank all of my colleagues for working in good faith to get this Defense bill done.

The Senate will then turn to the critical matter of addressing the debt limit in order to avoid a first-ever default on our sovereign debt. Last week, Democrats and Republicans came together to pass legislation, setting up a fast-track process for addressing the debt limit. Today, we are going to complete that process, and it will come in two steps.

First, as I said, we will vote on the motion to proceed, followed by a vote on final passage later today. Thanks to last week's agreement between Democrats and Republicans, today's motion to proceed will be set at a majority threshold. Once we are on the bill, no amendments will be in order. Debate will be limited to 10 hours, and we hope to yield back debate time on our side to keep this process moving. The resolution we will vote on will provide for the raising of the debt limit to a level commensurate to funding that is necessary to get into 2023.

As I have said repeatedly, this is about paying debt accumulated by both parties, so I am pleased Republicans and Democrats came together to facilitate a process that has made addressing the debt ceiling possible. I want to thank the Republican leader and all of my Republican colleagues who reached out across the aisle in good faith to bring us to this point—no brinksmanship, no default on the debt, no risk of another recession. Responsible governing has won on this exceedingly important issue. The American people can breathe easy and rest assured there will not be a default.

So, once again, I thank the Republican leader and my Republican colleagues who voted with us to address this issue. The Senate can be done with this matter before the end of the day—

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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